

Bear Necessities

Rescue, Rehabilitation, Sanctuary, and Advocacy

Edited by

Lisa Kemmerer



BRILL

LEIDEN | BOSTON

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Introduction

Lisa Kemmerer

Wilderness and Bears

It was deep dusk, time to bed down, but I had not seen a suitable camping site for more than an hour. This was prime camping area ... except for the bear signs. I could see gigantic piles of bear scat strewn across the narrow spit. Still, I pulled up and made camp, stuffing odiferous items into bear barrels and stashing them more than 100 meters (330 ft.) from my campsite. I also cooked and ate dinner 100 meters from the tent—and 100 meters from the food stash—then crawled into my sleeping bag. I placed a can of bear spray by my head, where I could find it quickly in a pinch, and fell peacefully to sleep.

I awoke sometime in the night to the wuff-snuffling and rustle of heavy-weights. Despite their close proximity, I was more fascinated than frightened: Brown bears were going about their lives just outside my tent—just one meter (3 ft.) from my right shoulder. I had heard about brown bears ripping into tents and mauling people for no apparent reason, but I had been among bears long enough to know that they were more eager to avoid me than I was to avoid them. I had seen dozens of black and brown bears across decades of outdoor adventures—always with a sense of wonder—and only briefly before they disappeared from sight. Just once they held ground, when I pulled ashore to investigate a whale carcass buzzing with bear activity. Though curious, I moved on. The carrion was their prize—and I knew they would defend it.

On this particular night, I wasn't going anywhere. Too tired to fight sleep, I drifted off to the wuff-snuffling of bears outside my tent.

Brown bears add an additional layer to any wilderness experience. Good judgment is critical, and knowing how to camp is essential (both for ourselves and for bears)—but nothing assures us that we will avoid a chance encounter with one of these powerful citizens of the wilderness. No matter how cautious we are, we might startle a bear near a stream or come too near a carrion stash, triggering aggression. Among brown bears, we sleep knowing that someone might kill and consume us during the night, and that we are largely defenseless against such an attack. However remote the possibility, this knowledge is humbling and enriching. Brown bears remind us what it means to be animals—part of the natural world.

Humans and Bears

Bears provide an opportunity for self-reflection. Bears and humans share habitat and essential behaviors, and the physical resemblance between bears and humans can be “striking, and somewhat frightening” (Nelson 175). Both bears and humans occupy a wide range of ecosystems. Both are opportunistic omnivores, consuming a large variety of foods. Both are among just a handful of species that live on land but also swim and climb (but cannot fly). Females are significantly smaller than males. Bears and humans both have frontal, binocular vision. The lips of bears, like human lips, are free of the gums. As with humans, bear forearms rotate in a full circle, and their front forelimbs have two bones—radius and ulna (G. Brown 47). Both species have soles on the bottoms of their feet, and five toes. Their hind feet leave prints that look remarkably like human footprints, and are similarly employed: Heels on the back paws of bears touch down first, followed by the entire sole, all of which is weight-bearing (Dolson 85; Wood 98). Like our hands, their forepaws are dexterous—they can “pick pine nuts from cones, and unscrew jar lids”; bears are able to open a variety of “bear-proof” lids (G. Brown 74, 98). Both bears and humans are able to stand upright. Both sit on their tailbones, settling for a rest on logs, stumps, and rocks.

Humans and bears both defend offspring fiercely: Male bears usually defer to females with cubs “because they know that she will defend them to the death” (Domico and Newman 16; Wood 54). Bears and humans both snore. Both reprimand young for misbehaving—a smack with an open paw tells a cub to modify behaviors (G. Brown 48; Wood 56). Both we and they demonstrate affection, have strong memories, and are relatively intelligent. Both are playful, curious, and wily (G. Brown 136–37, 98, 97, 130–131). We are even susceptible to some of the same maladies, including arthritis, cataracts, tuberculosis, bronchopneumonia, and dental cavities (G. Brown 91–92).

Bears and Human Cultures

With so many obvious and intriguing similarities, it is reasonable to assume that our age-old fascination with bears stems, at least in part, from seeing ourselves in these distinctive beings. Indeed, across continents and time people have given bears special mention. Ancient cultures have pulled bears into their circle with terms of endearment such as “man bear,” “wise man,” “sacred man,” “elder brother,” “uncle,” “great grandmother/father,” and “four-legged human” (G. Brown 25–28). Humans have named both cities and children after bears: Place-names such as those of Bern and Berlin, and personal names such as

Bernard and Robert, stem from native words for “bear” (Dolson 149). Humans have focused ceremonies and rituals around bears, and have recreated bears in drawings, paintings, and sculptures. Ancient people recounted innumerable myths about bears and bear-human relations—still today we create and share stories about bears.

Artifacts from ancient human civilizations include the bones of bears and artistic depictions of bears, suggesting that bears were important both ritually and for worship (Gill 116). Bear remains have frequently been found in burial sites. Xi'an's ancient Chinese tombs hold the skulls of very large giant pandas (Domico and Newman 125). Ancient people in the Swiss Alps manipulated leg bones through the cheek arches of bear skulls, and filled stone chests with groupings of carefully placed bear skulls (*Ursus splaeus*) (Gill 116; Domico and Newman 5). Bear images and bear remains were stashed in funerary sites in what is now England. Sometimes Celtic people decorated their dead with beartooth necklaces or left images of bears in graves; they also laid kings to rest on bear skins (Green 42, 54, 52, 217).

Bears were extremely important to cultures of early North America. In the northwest, the Kwakiutl (coastal British Columbia) frequently carved bears on totem poles (Wood 89). In the southeast, people placed objects ceremonially alongside the bones of both the Florida cave bear (*Tremarctos floridans*) and the giant short-faced bear. Sioux peoples (Minnesota and Dakotas, into Iowa and Nebraska) had bear visions, bear rituals, bear dreamers, and bear medicine men (DeMallie 40–41). Pawnee people (Nebraska and northern Kansas) revered bear shamans, Ute (Utah, Nevada, Colorado, and Arizona) engaged in a bear dance, and the Omaha (Nebraska and Kansas) danced in imitation of bears—a dance reserved for those believed to be blessed by supernatural brown bears (Lowie 164, 177, 184).

It is easy to identify bear imagery in petroglyphs, pictograms, and rough paintings left by earlier peoples across Europe. A particularly intriguing bronze sculpture from Bern, Switzerland, depicts a big-headed, very large bear facing the Patron of Bears, a tidy, slim, robed woman seated with what looks to be a bowl of fruit. An inscription on the image dedicates the art to Celtic bear-goddess, Artio (stemming from “artos” which means “bear”). She was likely viewed as having a close affinity with bears, assuring their continued existence as well as the success of the hunt, and serving as an intermediary between humans and bears (Green 217–18). Standing in front of a dead tree and stretching forward toward the woman, mouth slightly opened, perhaps the bear hopes to taste some fruit. (see figure 0.1)

Many ancient myths feature bears. In North American mythology, no other animal “assumed such a widespread and honored position” as did bears



FIGURE 0.1 *Artio, Celtic goddess with bear, bronze, 200 CE, sketch by Lisa Kemmerer*

(Wood 8). Mythology of the Modoc people (Southwestern Oregon) recounts how a grizzly bear and a Sky spirit gave birth to the first human beings (Erdoes 85–7). Among Athapaskans (Alaska and NW Canada) myths explain how Bear held (and thereby controlled) all-important Fire, which was inevitably stolen (and dispersed) by other animals (Campbell 277). Hero legends of the Seneca, Iroquois, and Delaware (in and around New York) tell of a large and fierce bear (Nya-Gwahe)—bones of an immense, extinct, short-faced bear have been unearthed in this region—a bear roughly twice the size of the largest contemporary bear and likely the largest mammalian carnivore ever to walk the earth (Wood 5). A Scandinavian myth teaches that men can take on the attributes of bears by putting on a bear-skin shirt that will turn ordinary men into fierce warriors (Dolson 152). The word “berserk,” literally meaning “bear shirt,” initially referred to such a fierce warrior (“Berserk”). Myths of the Blackfoot (Montana and Alberta, US/Canada border) tell of a sacred bear-spear used for battle and for curing the sick, gifted to the people by a gentle-eyed Great Bear (Spence 189).

Awareness of inter-species similarities between humans and bears seems particularly evident in North American myths that tell of bears and humans who become partners, creating children who cannot be distinguished from other human beings and who live compatibly among both bears and humans. The Haida people (coastal British Columbia) tell of a young woman, kidnapped by bears and wed to a bear, who gives birth to two boys. She and her boys are eventually brought back to the mother's village, where they live among humans for the rest of their days (Erdoes 419–423). Blackfeet myths recount a maiden enraging her family by choosing to marry a grizzly instead of a man. Her father kills her bear-husband, and through the “agency of her husband's supernatural power,” the young wife becomes a fierce bear to avenge his death—tearing through her people's camp, killing even her own father and mother (Spence 183). A Cherokee myth tells of a man who moves in with bears and learns to live as they live, even growing thick body hair—though he continues to walk upright. When hunters killed his bear friend, he returns to his human family, but dies soon after because he “still had a bear's nature and could not live like a man” (D. Brown 22).

We continue to create and share stories about bears through the printed word and animated media. Relatively few English-speakers reach adulthood without hearing the children's story, *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*. First published in the early 19th century, the origins of this story have been lost to time. The version that most of us know is about a curious little girl named Goldilocks, who stumbles onto a bear's home in the woods when the bear family is out for a morning walk. She barges into their home and rudely samples porridge, chairs, and beds—always preferring those of the baby bear. Goldilocks gobbles up all of his porridge, breaks his chair, and falls peacefully to sleep in his little bed, where she awakens to find the bear family looking down at her. Terrified, she flees (Dolson 156).

Walt Morey's children's novel, *Gentle Ben* (1965), features a friendship between a boy (Mark) and a bear (Gentle Ben), and their many shared adventures. The location of Morey's story was moved from Alaska to Florida, and a brown bear was replaced with a captive American black bear (an orphan named Bruno) in order to create the television series, *Gentle Ben*, which aired 56 episodes in just two seasons (1967–1969), and the film *Gentle Giant* (1967). In 2002 and 2003, remakes of *Gentle Ben* were shaped into two made-for-TV movies (“Gentle,” *My Time*; “Gentle,” *Wikipedia*; “Grizzly”).

The inspiration for A.A. Milne's delightfully bumbling honey-colored bear, Pooh, was a very real bear. In 1914, Captain Harry Colebourn, a veterinarian who was caring for army horses in Quebec, bought a cub (for \$20, from a hunter who had shot the cub's mother) at a train stop in Manitoba. Colebourn

hand-raised the cub, whom he named Winnipeg. When his brigade shipped to France, he gave the young bear to London Zoo, where she was an instant hit. It was there that Milne met Winnipeg, who inspired both *Winnie-the-Pooh* (1926) and *House at Pooh Corner* (1928). Winnipeg died in 1934, but Pooh is alive and well in the hearts and minds of millions of Milne's readers as well as those who are familiar with this humble honey-loving bear by way of animated media (G. Brown 234; Dolson 168).

Smokey, a fictional bear whose name was given to a real bear, was fabricated by the U.S. forest service in 1944, for educational purposes. This stout bear holds a shovel, wears blue jeans fastened with a black belt, and has "Smokey" written on his tan ranger's hat. In 1950, when a burned cub was rescued from a tree in a forest fire in New Mexico, the rescued bear was dubbed the living Smokey. After his burns healed, he was housed in a Washington DC zoo until he died in 1976. The educational image of Smokey Bear lives on—"the longest-running public service campaign in history"—teaching yet another generation that "only you can prevent forest fires" (Dolson 145; G. Brown 234–35).

Yogi Bear, "the most popular television cartoon creation of TV's early years," Debuted in 1961 as a cartoon starring a bear named Yogi, who wore only a white collar, green tie, and green hat (Dolson 86). He often spoke in rhymes, and his favorite pastime was stealing "pic-a-nic" baskets from park visitors. Dressed in a light blue tutu/skirt and yellow scarf, his girlfriend, Cindy Bear, disapproved of Yogi's thieving ways, as did his pint-sized sidekick, Boo-Boo Bear. Boo-Boo, wearing only a blue bow tie, served as Yogi's conscience, urging Yogi to follow park rules and leave "pic-a-nic" baskets alone. *Yogi Bear* was popular enough to be turned into a host of animated television shows, movies, comic books, video games, and a 2010 live-action 3-D animated film, *Yogi Bear*.

Stuffed bears are perhaps the most pervasive evidence of our fascination with bears. The first "teddy bear" was sold in Morris and Rose Michtom's shop in New York City in 1902. Morris Michtom saw a Clifford Berryman cartoon in the *Washington Post* that portrayed Roosevelt's refusal to shoot a bear, though the bear had been clubbed and restrained specifically for the success and pleasure of the president's hunt. The *Washington Post* bear was patterned after a koala cub, despite the fact that the actual bear—roped and ready to be killed—was an adult American black bear, who weighed about 100 kg (220 lbs.). On seeing this cartoon bear, Michtom asked his wife, Rose, to design a toy replica. She did, and she also asked the president for permission to call the toy a "Teddy" bear, which he reluctantly granted (G. Brown 233–34; Dolson 74).

So it was that Michael Bond saw a lonely-looking teddy bear on a shelf in a store near London's Paddington Station on Christmas Eve, 1956, and took the bear home for his wife. The stuffed bear inspired Bond to write *A Bear Called*

Paddington, which became the first in a long series of extremely popular children's stories featuring a well-meaning, polite immigrant, who loves marmalade sandwiches ... and just happens to be a bear. Bond's books tell how Paddington Bear arrived from Peru with a note pinned on his coat (like so many children left in London's railway stations after the war), how he was adopted by the Browns, and of the young bear's adventures and mishaps in his new home. The stories highlight Paddington's remarkable ability to get into trouble, offset by his determination to "get things right." Bond's books have been translated into "30 languages across 70 titles" and have "sold more than 30 million copies worldwide" ("Paddington").

From ancient myth to contemporary stories adapted for cinema, humans create and recreate stories about bears and bear-human relations. Images of bears grace the graves of long dead peoples, while contemporary children around the world fall asleep cuddling stuffed and tattered teddy bears. Our fascination with bears appears to be as old as human civilization, and shows no sign of fading.

Hunting Bears

Despite the allure of bears, and our perceived affinities, humans have hunted these large mammals for centuries. Perhaps because of a felt kinship with bears, killing them often required elaborate rituals. For example, the Northern Sauteaux (Ojibwa) viewed American black bears as kin, as capable of understanding both what was said and why certain things were done—both when alive and after death. Hunters apologized before killing a bear, and begged the victim not to become angry about being killed. Sauteaux were obligated to only kill bears with a club and knife, and once dead, they dressed bears in finery. The bear's body was then divided, and there were strict rules as to which members of the community would eat prescribed portions of the body. When finished, the skull, muzzle skin, and ears were left as an offering on a pole, along with tobacco and decorative ribbons, in the hope of successful future bear hunts. They believed that bears only came to hunters when sent by the chief of bears—and only if previously hunted bears delivered a favorable report (Gill 117, 119). Similarly, Naskapi (Labrador Peninsula) hunters apologized before killing a bear, and placed an offering of tobacco in the bear's mouth after death (Gill 115).

Among the indigenous Ainu of Japan, the Asiatic black bear was considered a god. When a mother bear was killed and her young cub captured, the orphan was brought to the village with pomp and celebration, and placed with a

human family to play with human children, and to be nursed by a human mother alongside her biological children. When the cub's sharp claws became dangerous, the orphan was caged. A couple of years later, the bear would be taken out and paraded around, poked with arrows to induce fury, pinned down and pierced in the heart with an arrow (Campbell 335–37). Counterintuitively, the purpose of the prolonged ritual was to ask the “divine bear being” to bring a favorable report back to the gods—to report how well he or she had been treated by the Ainu—in the hope that more bears might be sent to be killed, providing both food and skins (Campbell 336–37).

Bear flesh and fur were important to many earlier communities. The Cree (Eastern Canada) overtly referred to the American black bear as “black food” (G. Brown 25). Bears were also killed out of fear. When describing a successful brown bear hunt, the Koyukon (northern North America) would often say, “We got rid of that one” (Nelson 186). Though they killed bears, earlier peoples lacked sophisticated weaponry and were spread too thin to decimate bear populations. Within recorded history—in some instances within living memory—bears were plentiful in vast forested regions and wide-open spaces of Europe, Asia, and the Americas. This is no longer the case. A handful of brown bear subspecies, including California golden brown bears, Mexican grizzlies, and Atlas brown bears, survived into contemporary times only to be blasted into oblivion by modern weapons.

The California brown bear—still the official state animal—stands proud on California's flag, is central to the names of two state university sports teams (California Golden Bears of UC Berkeley, UCLA Bruins of UC Los Angeles), and is the mascot (Scottie the Bear) for a third university (UC Riverside). But the last known California brown bear was shot in 1922 for the sake of a bear rug, probably long ago sent to the dump. (Domico and Newman 63).

Mexican grizzlies were last seen in the 1960s. This smallish (360 kg/800 lbs) bear grazed on greens, fruits, and insects, and with the arrival of animal agriculture, the occasional lamb or calf. Consequently, farmers and ranchers shot, poisoned, and trapped this silvery brown bear into oblivion (“Mexican”). “[R]egarded by farmers as a pest and by ordinary people as dangerous,” they were ultimately exterminated “due to cattle ranching in both the United States and Mexico” (“Brown”; “Mexican”).

The only bear to survive until recent times in Africa, another smallish bear who fed on nuts and roots in the Atlas Mountains of Morocco, Tunisia, and Algeria, was driven to extinction less than 150 years ago. When the Roman Empire expanded into Africa, thousands of Atlas bears were pitted against criminals to entertain the elite. Emperor Caligula once saw 400 of these beautiful reddish-orange-brown bears to their deaths in a single day; Emperor

Gordian squandered one thousand precious bears in just one blood-sport orgy (Domico and Newman 144). Apparently, the killing continued after the Romans retreated: The last sighting of an Atlas bear was in the 1870s.

Bear hunting and trapping continue to be permitted in many nations, including the U.S. and Canada. In contemporary times, the ratio of bears to humans is precipitously slanted in favor of humans, and our killing methods have become much more deadly. The world's bears have little chance against modern weapons in a world where roads provide ready access to once secluded habitat.

Bears and Wilderness

Bears are ecologically important. They balance rodent and insect populations, fertilize riparian lands, and “plant” seeds—just one pile of scat can carry upwards of 300 seeds. After passing through a bear, seeds are considerably more likely to germinate: raspberries twice as likely, chokeberries thrice as likely, and dogwood a whopping seven times more likely (Wood 73). While digging for roots and grubs, bears loosen the earth, helping new seeds take root; they feed scavengers such as eagles and seagulls, wolves and foxes, who hover nearby in hopes of securing leftovers (Wood 77). Bears kill sick and wounded wildlife, helping to maintain healthy populations, and they reduce the spread of disease by consuming carrion (G. Brown 173).

Bears also offer hope for medical breakthroughs: If we come to understand bear dormancy—how some bears are inactive for months without loss of bone mass and without any incapacitating loss of muscle structure—we might better tend bedridden humans (Wood 36). This must be done, of course, without confining, controlling, or otherwise mistreating bears—they are not here for our purposes.

The bears of the world are flagship species, species that capture our imaginations and our hearts, species that are therefore more likely to gain our attention—and our protection. In the process, we protect habitat, thereby securing the futures of myriad other living beings. The Yangtze River dolphin (baiji) and the western black rhino—both recently declared extinct—did not move us to much-needed change. Perhaps bears can.

This anthology has one clear purpose: Heighten awareness regarding the precarious plight of the world's bears with the explicit hope of helping to bring change. It is my hope that readers—that you—will become part of the change that is necessary if we are to secure a future for bears. In so doing, we secure the futures of many species currently threatened by human habits and lifestyles.

It is my hope that you will support individuals and organizations that help bears, and that you will make necessary lifestyle changes to protect bears and their habitat.

Authors

Many authors in this anthology are busy activists; some know English only as a second (or third) language. In most instances, I work extensively with authors to create lucid essays, sometimes co-authoring in order to bring important ideas, experiences, and understandings to press.

I *Bear Basics*

Essays in the first section introduce bear species and some of the key problems that harm these bears and threaten dwindling bear populations. The first essay introduces the world's eight bear species. Next, **Victor Watkins** takes us to Greece, Turkey, Pakistan, and China, describing "dancing" bears, bear baiting, and the bear bile industry, and describing the creation of the world's first bear sanctuary. After working at a wildlife sanctuary in Thailand, **Amy Corrigan** settled in Singapore, where she works to free bears from dank pits in zoos and unconscionable bile farms throughout Southeast Asia. Closing the first section, working at the Center for Biological Diversity, **Kassie Siegel** and **Brendan Cummings** explore politics and policies of climate change, the Arctic, and polar bears.

II *A World of Trouble*

In the second section, authors describe specific problems facing particular bear species in certain areas of the world. Founder and CEO of Animals Asia Foundation, **Jill Robinson** explains the bear bile market, and what this industry does to the health and lives of endangered Asiatic black bears such as Franzi, who spent 22 years in the bile industry. **Siew Te Wong** and I explore the large ecological role of the pint-sized sun bear, the work of the Bornean Sun Bear Conservation Centre, and the rehabilitation of a tiny cub named Mary. **Cristina Lapis** tells of her work at Romania's Libearty Sanctuary Zărnești on behalf of Eastern Europe's disappearing brown bears. **Charlotte Cressey** describes American black bear rescue, rehabilitation, and release. **Sarah M. Bexell** describes her work with giant pandas, on whose behalf she presses for much-needed change. Pakistani wildlife biologist **Fakhar -i- Abbas** describes the history and practice of bear baiting, and the joy of tending rescued bears at Kund Bear Sanctuary. In the next essay, I explain how Wildlife SOS (wsos)

closed down India's dancing bear industry and set the standard for sloth bear veterinary care around the world. **Dalma Zsalakó** relays her adventures on the steep slopes of the Andes Mountains, while **Kerry Fugett**, **Simona Kobel**, and I explain why Andean bears are at risk and describe the work of Ecuador's Andean Bear Foundation.

III *Policy*

The third section examines policies that affect bears, starting with six members of British Columbia's **Raincoast Conservation Foundation**, who describe how typical fisheries management policies harm ecosystems and coastal brown bears, and how this organization has brought change through informed advocacy. Also in British Columbia, **Mick Webb** looks back on grassroots actions that successfully created a community where people and bears coexist peacefully. My essay offers a window onto the convoluted relationships between U.S. government wildlife agencies and wildlife rehabilitation. **Ann Bryant** explains how a bear turned her down a path that ultimately brought big changes for black bears in California's Lake Tahoe region, and **Tara Zuardo** describes how her work as a lawyer reshaped her understanding of U.S. courts and problems facing the nation's Endangered wildlife. In the last policy essay, **Anna Beech** and **Marc Brody** describe China's state-of-the-art captive breeding program, and life for pandas on Panda Mountain.

IV *Bears and Beyond*

Opening the closing section, I highlight critical ways in which our personal daily choices affect the survival of the world's bears. **Tom Regele** juxtaposes earlier indigenous views of the Andean bear with those of Catholics who conquered South America to explore the role of mental conceptions in determining the fate of species. Sociologist **Daniel Kirjner** and I compare Erwing Goffman's explanation of Total Institutions both with animal exploitation and with animal sanctuaries, highlighting the necessity and the tragedy of a Cambodian bear sanctuary. In the final essay, **Dana Medoro** leafs through the writings of such diverse masters as William Faulkner, Jacques Derrida, and Lewis Carroll to explore how we envision our place in the world, and how this understanding shapes our interactions with cats and oysters and bears.

Bears and Wilderness

Humans breed prolifically, consume voraciously, and aggressively pursue wildlife with deadly weapons. Our consumption habits create climate change.

As our numbers grow, we increasingly invade and destroy habitat, isolating dwindling wildlife populations, threatening innumerable species—including bears. Despite the dire predicament of bears, many European communities resist re-introduction of brown bears in nearby forested regions out of fear—though their homes are built where bears recently roamed. People living in and around the Andes shoot bears to prevent them from eating maize—planted in fields that only recently replaced critical bear habitat. Around the world, poachers follow newly created logging roads into once remote forests in order to hunt down bears, in order to exchange bear gallbladders and paws for cash. In the U.S., an influx and proliferation of humanity has extirpated brown bears from most of their previous range, and vastly reduced all bear species. In regions now bereft of brown bears, we have extirpated one of very few species that was strong and fierce enough to remind us that we are no more essential to the unfolding of this planet than the Yangtze River dolphin or the western black rhino.

When I leave the cloistered and pampered world of human civilization to hoist backpack or paddles, family and friends never fail to caution me regarding bears. I am careful, but I am much more concerned about the welfare of bears than I am about the remote possibility that a bear might harm me. And I am much more focused on the importance of protecting bears—both for their sake and for our own. Bears heighten my senses and humble me with the knowledge that, once stripped of the artifice of human civilization, I am just another edible animal. In the presence of bears, we can be reminded of things too often overlooked in our busy, cosmopolitan lives, things that are vitally important with regard to the earth's future. It is important for human beings, increasingly urban, to stand outside of our human-centered, human-dominated, plastic and pavement world to explore our personal limitations and frailties, to better see our damaging power, unjustified arrogance, and ultimate irrelevance.

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